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HALLAM, STEVEN C., *Basics of Classical Syriac: Complete Grammar, Workbook, and Lexicon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), pp. 320. \$49.99. ISBN 978-0-3105-2786-2.

(John— the ISBN and publication year of the DVD set is different from the grammar, so I have made a second heading below, if that is the correct thing to do.)

HALLAM, STEVEN C., *Basics of Classical Syriac Video Lectures: A Complete Course for the Beginner* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2017), 3 DVDs. \$99. ISBN 978-0-310-53517-1.

This introduction to Syriac would be useful for a graduate student or scholar already familiar with Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic. There are two peculiarities to this grammar that make it recommended that it is used with an instructor, or at least with the DVD lectures. Hallam uses the earliest Eastern script, Estrangelo, with *ser̄to* (Western) vowels, a script that historically did not have diacritics. Secondly, Hallam does not include spirant marks in the lessons, paradigms, or lexicon—only in the biblical exercises. This could be confusing for a beginner to go back and forth, potentially leading to oversight in pronunciation. However, Hallam's *Basics* is approachable and sensitive, with reassurances, simplified explanations, and shortcuts. This grammar is aimed at reading comprehension rather than explaining every point of grammar, and the exercises are happily balanced between NT and HB/OT. The drawback of the biblical passages as exercises is that students might depend on English translations or Hebrew for the sense and meaning. There are transliterations throughout, full paradigms, useful appendices, consistent references to fuller grammars and next steps, and the lessons are well-organized. The 3-DVD video lectures include eight total hours of accompanying virtual lessons, which are short (most are 15-20 minutes) and well-paced for those without Hebrew. The grammar's approachability and simplicity make it a satisfactory contribution to the study of this beautiful and often neglected language. It is an efficient introduction to Syriac that would get a NT, HB/OT, or early Church student/scholar off the ground and running with Syriac.

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